

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 EB-11 OMB-01 IO-14 DRC-01 AID-20 AGR-20

COME-00 TRSE-00 /157 W

----- 106022

R 151430Z JAN 74

FM MEMBASSY EW DELHI

TO SECST\*TE WASHDC 9042

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THE FOLLOWING TEL FROM BOMBAY SENT ACTION NEW DELHI INFO CALCUTTA  
AND MADRAS DTD 15 JAN IS RPTD:

QUOTE

BOMBAY 0119

E.O. 11652: /A

TAGS: PINT IN

SUBJ: BOMBAY S JAN 13 PARLIAMENTARY BY ELECTION; OR THE WORM  
TURNS

REF BOMBAY 0078, 0113

\*. SUMMAR\*: CONGRESS SUFFE\* ED A HUMILIATING D\* EAT IN THE  
JAN 3 BOMBAY CENTRAL \*NORTH) PARLIAMENT\*\*Y BY-E\*LECTION T  
FILL SEAT LEFT VACANT BY GHANDARE'S APPOINTMENT AS GOV\*RNOR  
BI\*AR. TH\* CPI CANDIDATE ROZA DESHPANDE (CPI CHIEF  
DANG 'S DAUGHTER) WON, THE J\*NA SANGH \*ANDIDATE PANDIT  
WAS RUNNER-UP WITH \*ONGRESS CANDIDATE\*ADIK COMING IN THIRD.  
E\*ECTION NOTABLE IN THAT ONLY SOME 38 PERCENT OF THE ELECTORATE  
TURNED OUT TO VOTE MAKING IT THE LOWEST TURNOUT IN BOMBAY'S  
HISTORY. OF A CONSTITUENCY ELECTORATE OF 648,976, ONLY 240,220

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VOTES WERE CAST. ACCORDING RESULTS WHICH WERE NOT KNOWN UNTIL  
EVE 14TH, CPI GOT 81,653 VOTES, JANA SANGH 74,677, AND

CONGRESS 70,185. WHAT HAD BEEN GENERALLY EXPECTED TO BE A SUBSTANTIAL CONGRESS VICTORY A MONTH AGO AND MORE RECENTLY A VERY SLIM ONE TURNED INTO A BITTER DEFEAT AT THE POLLS AND NEWS OF WHICH CAME IN THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF THE CANCELLATION OF THE PM'S PROPOSED VISIT TO BOMBAY JAN 14-15 (REFTEL). HAD SHE COME IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A PARTICULARLY BITTER PILL TO SWALLOW. END SUMMARY.

2. COMMENT: IN OUR VIEW CONGRESS DEFEAT CAN BE ATTRIBUTED PRIMARILY TO FOLLOWING:

1) FUNDAMENTAL FACTOR IS SWELLING TIDE OF POPULAR DISCONTENT OVER SHORTAGES AND RISING PRICES AND DISSATISFACTION WITH CONGRESS GOVT AND ITS APPARENT INABILITY DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH SITUATION. THIS IN OUR VIEW CONTRIBUTED SIGNIFICANTLY TO VOTER INDIFFERENCE AND DISGUST WITH GOVT AND IN TURN TO HIGH RATE OF ABSTENTIONS. (FOOTNOTE: IT WAS ANNOUNCED IN PRESS THIS MORNING THAT FOODGRAIN RATION BOMBAY WOULD BE CUT BY ONE KILO IN SECOND FORTNIGHT THIS MONTH).

2) FAILURE TO GET THE SCHEDULED CASTE VOTES WHICH NUMBER ABOUT 86,000 IN THIS CONSTITUENCY. SCHEDULED CASTES APPARENTLY OBSERVED CALL BY SCHEDULED CASTE MILITANT YOUTH GROUP (DALIT PANTHERS) TO BOYCOTT ELECTIONS RATHER THAN HEED CALL BY FACTIONAL LEADERS RPI TO SUPPORT CONGRESS.

3) CONGRESS-SHIV SENA ELECTORAL ALLIANCE BACKFIRED BADLY AND IN RETROSPECT PROVED TO BE A MAJOR MISCALCULATION ON PART LOCAL CONGRESS LEADERSHIP AND PARTICULARLY BPCC PRES RAJNI PATEL. RANK AND FILE AS WELL SECOND ECHELON LEADERSHIP OF SHIV SENA REFUSED FOLLOW CALL BY THEIR LEADER THACKERAY TO SUPPORT CONGRESS. ALLIANCE TRIGGERED A REVOLT WITH ONE GROUP SUPPORTING THE JANA SANGH AND THE OTHER THE HINDU MAHASABHA CANDIDATE. ON OTHER HAND, ALLIANCE UNDOUBTEDLY ALIENATED A NUMBER OF TRADITIONAL CONGRESS NON-MARATHI VOTERS.

4) THE MUSLIMS APPARENTLY ABSTAINED IN LARGE NUMBERS REFLECTING GROWING ESTRANGEMENT FROM CONGRESS AND THE LATTER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
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FAILED TO GET MUCH SUPPORT FROM THE NUMEROUS SLUM DWELLERS IN THIS CONSTITUENCY ON WHOM THEY HAVE COUNTED IN PAST.

3. THE CPI FOR ITS PART GAINED MOMENTUM AS ELECTIONS NEARED WITH DANGE PERSONALLY MASTERMINDING CAMPAIGN AND UTILIZED TEXTILE STRIKE WHICH STILL CONTINUING TO REESTABLISH ITS IDENTITY AND POSITION WITH WORKERS. CONGRESS FOUND ITSELF ON THE SIDE OF THE MILLOWNERS ON THIS ONE IN VIEW EARLIER RMMS AGREEMENT WITH THEM. CPI ALSO PROFITED FROM JAN 2 MAHARASHTRA BANDH AS WELL AS CPM AND PWP SUPPORT. THE JANA SANGH FOR ITS PART DID WELL AND IF IT COULD HAVE GARNERED VOTES TAKEN BY

HINDU MAHASABHA CANDIDATE IT MIGHT HAVE WON.

4. CONCLUSIONS: AS WE VIEW IT BOMBAY BY-ELECTION JAN 13 IS A HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL EVENT AND MAY COME TO BE REGARDED AS A BENCHMARK IN INDIAN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT. THE ELECTION SUGGESTS THAT THE INDIAN VOTER (IN URBAN AREAS AT LEAST) CAN NO LONGER BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED OR DELIVERED BY A GROUP LEADER, THAT IS, TRADITIONAL PATTERNS MAY NO LONGER BE COUNTED ON TO PREVAIL. THE CONGRESS ELECTORAL ALLIANCE WITH SHIV SENA AND RPI FAILED BECAUSE THEIR LEADERS COULDN'T DELIVER THEIR FOLLOWERS. THE ELECTION ALSO SUGGESTS THAT A LARGE NUMBER OF VOTERS ARE LOSING CONFIDENCE IN THE CONGRESS, ITS GOVERNMENTAL APPARATUS AND ENTIRE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM. THE HIGH RATE OF ABSTENTIONS REFLECTING INDIFFERENCE TO DISGUST SUGGESTS THIS. THE ELECTION ALSO UNDERSCORES THE DEPTH OF POPULAR DISCONTENT OVER SHORTAGES AND RISING PRICES AND THE UNWILLINGNESS OF THE ELECTORATE GENERALLY TO ACCEPT AT FACE VALUE THE ENTREATIES TO BE PATIENT AND TIGHTEN BELTS FOR A LITTLE WHILE LONGER. MAYBE THE WORM HAS AT LONG LAST BEGUN TO TURN.

B E

UNQUOTE. MOYNIHAN

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## Message Attributes

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